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SNAPSHOT

Tirin Kot Residents Enjoy Nightlife

Safety and security are enhanced in the capital of a restive province



Photo: USAID/ACEP/Zularistan

A row of completed streetlights along the roadside in Tirin Kot.

Twenty new solar streetlights recently installed in Tirin Kot's bazaar have enhanced nighttime security, extended business hours, and made the area safer for security personnel patrolling there after dark.

Uruzgan province in Afghanistan's south-central region is the birthplace of Mullah Omar and a hotbed of Taliban sympathizers. As a result, it suffers from high insecurity and frequent insurgent activity.

Tirin Kot, the provincial capital with a population of about 10,000, has a busy main bazaar that includes more than 200 shops, a hospital, a police station, and a number of private residences. It was widely agreed that public lighting was needed to extend business hours in the bazaar and also help secure the area during the night hours, particularly for security forces patrolling the area after dark.

In coordination with Uruzgan's provincial governor and the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Tirin Kot, USAID funded the installation of 20 solar-powered street-lights in Tirin Kot. The lights were installed by Zularistan Ltd., an Afghan company, who also trained two local men selected by the mayor in how to operate and maintain them.

Each streetlight possesses two 60 watt photovoltaic solar panels, as well as a 180 Ah deep-cycle sealed lead acid battery and charge controller. The system powers a 30 watt high-intensity LED lamp that illuminates about a 25-meter radius. The lights are preset with an adjustable controller from the ground to come on automatically in the evening and turn off the following morning.

Local residents, shopkeepers, and security forces have all expressed their delight with the streetlights and say they have made them feel much safer. One community elder, Haji Abdul Raziq, whose home is located near one of the streetlights, said, "We are very happy about these kinds of projects. We used to be afraid at night because of the complete darkness. We hope such projects will be implemented in other parts of our province. Thanks a lot for supporting us."

Another local resident and shopkeeper, Sayed Habib, said, "There is light at nighttime now. Our roads also look really nice with the lights. Now we shopkeepers can do business until late at night. I hope it will help security as well and help security watchmen in our area."